

THE ARIZONA SILVER BELT

Established in 1878 by A. H. Mackney

JOS. H. HAMILL, Editor and Proprietor

Entered at the Postoffice at Globe, Arizona, as second-class matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year (in advance) \$2.50
Six Months 1.25
Three Months75

Advertising rates made known on application at this office.

THURSDAY, - - AUGUST 31, 1905.

Official Paper of Gila County.

THE CROWNING INIQUITY

We are informed on the authority of a member of the Eighteenth territorial assembly that, since that epoch in the history of Arizona, no less than fifty-two unimportant and practically valueless—to the people—soft snaps in the way of political sinecures have been placed upon the already bent shoulders of a growing territory. Tax burdens have been piled up to make room for more carpetbaggers and their parasites, and to the end that Phoenix might contain a little something besides the capital and necessary buildings for housing those who misgoverned. The ambitious youth who was struggling on with a desire for eventual statehood and manhood was shackled and manacled and then bidden God-speed by the hypocrites who professed to wish Arizona well.

The climax has been reached during this month by the arbitrary action of the territorial board of buldoze. The valuations of property have been abnormally increased and the territorial tax rate—for the general fund—elevated to an unwarrantable extent, and for what purpose the governor and territorial auditor may know, but the people who pay the freight are left hopelessly in the dark.

A raise of practically \$15,000,000 in assessed valuation and the boost in the rate of taxation makes an increase to swell the general fund by approximately fifteen per cent, for which no special uses have been assigned. If this is not simply a stand-and-deliver proposition there never was one.

It does not mean the piling up of a surplus out of which to create more political graft and still further develop the town of Phoenix, what in the world is it needed for?

If it does not presage more office making and paternal care for carpetbaggers, what does it for?

If bonds were to be retired or debts paid, obligations cancelled there would probably not be a voice raised in criticism because of the general prosperity. It is this prosperity which always inspires the professional politician with ideas of graft.

In this case the big corporations were aimed at and it seems as if the bosses had determined to place a portion of their earnings—or capital, it makes no difference which to the politician—in the public coffers, where it may be absorbed in the ways only known to the legislative professional.

Only a few weeks before the board of inequalities held its session the Phoenix press published many statements as to the great earning capacity of the new bureau of corporations. Forty to fifty thousand dollars a year coming in for the issuance of corporation charters. Still the revenues must be increased, ergo—soak the mines. Maricopa has no mines worth speaking of so no increase could harm the protected county.

But with that beautiful lack of the sense of equity governing all the transactions of the board from the time the railroads were—not increased, they overshot the mark. The board would like to kick themselves for only putting \$5,000,000 of the increase on the big "producers" and more than \$6,000,000 on the smaller mines, a great majority of which have never returned any income to their owners.

The rich companies would pay the tax if they thought it equitable or they could fight it if they thought the tax illegal and unjustifiable, and their attorneys advised that the levy might be broken.

But it is the hundreds of smaller operators and struggling companies who will feel the injustice most and who have every principle of equity behind them in their contention, and the bosses who rode rough shod over the rights of the small miner, prospector and non-resident owner will feel the impact of the boomerang.

The correct method of assessing mines has been presented to the territorial legislature and, though ably advocated by such men as Gen. Thomas F. Wilson, it was rejected. Under the different heads the proposition should be as follows:

The mining claim which is merely staked and legally located, should be taxed only as it produces bullion. Fortunes have been taken from the grass roots, where even a whim or bucket was not necessary. The man who got this money should have paid something of a tax on his good fortune to the gov-

ernment which gave him law and protected rights.

The man who thinks enough of a property to spend thousands of his own or a company's money in its development, should be willing to pay a reasonable tax on the realty—which he believes will one day make a fortune for him and his associates—in exchange for the legal protection afforded him in preventing others from infringing on his rights. But, is it equity to charge him a tax on the tools or machinery he is using up in his merely preliminary work? If he encounters pay ore in shipping quantities during development why should he not pay a reasonable tax on the bullion output?

If he decides that his ground is worth patenting, why should he not pay a tax on the realty he has fenced off from the territorial lands by his survey—the same as a homesteader pays on his land after proving up and getting a U. S. patent. But, if he does not work his mine and uses no plant or machinery, merely holding for a future market, why should he pay more—because it is said to be a mine—than the man who holds unimproved farm lands or city realty for an advance.

If he works his mine after patenting, his plant is subject to an equitable tax as a manufacturing concern and his output of bullion should be reasonably taxed as well.

No man can be equitably assessed when these gradations are not considered.

No mine owner, operator or smelter in Arizona would object to such a graded tax if he was assessed on the same relative basis as other property—notably, the railroads.

If it is the purpose to equalize taxation, then equalize one class of taxpayers with all others and not equalize all the load to one man's shoulders off all the others.

If some really equitable law is not passed soon the progress now so notable throughout the camps of the territory will receive a check which will stand Arizona endways until the balance is recovered. The farmers and ranchers of the territory cannot afford to shut off the home market, which is chiefly in the mining districts—that portion of the demand which brings spot cash and good prices—and depend wholly on the foreign demand.

Shut up the mines of Arizona—the big producers—and rely solely on outside markets for the cattle and produce raised and hear Maricopa howl for lower freight rates. She wants them even now, despite the toll she takes from all the other counties.

The Phoenix idea of equalization is to get her rates down to a minimum and have the rest of the territory pay her taxes on even that low basis.

None of the counties are satisfied. All praise some things and condemn others. The Guardian sings Kibbey's praise in Birdno-tes (Bantam cockerel), and incidentally pats its editor-assessor on the back because he "soaked" the big mines of Clifton and Morenci and left the farmers of his own streak of fat with less to pay. Then the other fellows near the mines and smelters tell what they think of the all-hog idea. Down in Solomonville the Bulletin declared that it is alright for the farmer to get off light and the big mines to pony up the lion's share, but it's a shame to assess the patented mines—non-producers—such an ungodly raise. This is equalization in sections. Each wants to equalize for his own pocket—and the other fellow be darned.

The other counties size up pretty nearly the same, "bye and low." One section pulling against the other as their personal and immediate interests demand.

The increase on horses, cows and mules made by the territorial board is just as unreasonable and inexcusable as that on the mines. The county boards have no alternative but to obey the mandate and let the big fellows fight it out with the territory. The local board has made the most equitable solution it could of the problem under able legal advice and the counties get the best of the deal in decreased rates. The sore spot is that several thousand dollars more revenue than should be required must be paid by Gila county tax payers and the territorial fund gets more of that than it is properly entitled to.

Some people urge such acts as this to be sufficient reason for joint statehood as a blessed relief from the carpet bag czarism.

As for the SILVER BELT, our opinion is all the stronger that only single statehood will save us from years of such political hucksters.

Pile it on! We can stand it so long as may be necessary, but the day of reckoning is not far distant. The whole territory will understand the nefarious method and what actuates the perpetrators of the rank injustice and voters will have something to say later on as well as the courts.

Better that it should come now than later.

Yellow fever has claimed 260 victims out of 1788 cases to date in New Orleans. The crucial point is at hand but the United States government physicians in charge claim to have the upper hand.

Yavapai's district attorney, Ellinwood has the courage of his convictions, declares the action of the territorial board of equalization illegal and advises the board of supervisors to ignore its order. More power to your elbow Mr. Ellinwood; now let all the others stand pat on the same foundation.

The price of copper continues to soar and the demand will broaden rapidly with improved conditions in the orient consequent upon the cessation of hostilities. There should be at least a year of sixteen cent copper with the possibility of a much higher range a portion of the time.

Peace terms have been arranged according to telegraphic advices received late on Tuesday and both sides can claim "peace with honor" each ruler according to his lights. It would be interesting to know the secret compacts and treaties entered into which made the published terms possible. But probably the world never will know until the line up is made for the next war. The United States and her strenuous president have moved up a few rounds on the ladder of international diplomacy.

The Trans-Mississippi Congress, at its recent session in Portland, passed strong resolutions favoring separate statehood for Arizona and New Mexico. These resolutions, coming from this special body of representative commercial men, covering the entire west from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean, and from the Canadian line to the Gulf of Mexico, is sufficient to show the almost unanimous opposition of the great and growing West to the proposition to make one state out of the two territories of New Mexico and Arizona.—Exchange.

The Roswell, N. M., Record has an editorial paragraph which seems to be intended to keep alive the flickering flame in the torch the jointists are waving. "It is stated that 95 per cent of the lawyers in Arizona favor joint statehood. The lawyers generally make things happen when they agree upon any public policy of legislation." By whom "it is stated" the paragraph does not say—nobody in New Mexico would dare to issue such a statement over his signature, because he would not wish to advertise that he was such an atrocious liar. If the statement was reversed it would be only slightly understating the truth.

CANANEA BOMBARDED BY ELECTRICAL STORM

Attorney J. W. Baker and Emil R. Wolff returned last night from Cananea, where they had been to straighten out some mining titles. They report the details of a tremendous storm which occurred there on Thursday night, beginning about 5 p. m. and lasting over one hour.

The storm was an electrical one, accompanied by an immense downpour of rain, and Judge Baker says that if it had continued as long again as it lasted, a general disaster would have taken place.

As it was, two men were killed by bolts of lightning, one sent to the hospital badly injured, and two buildings were destroyed.

According to Judge Baker's description, the day had been exceptionally close and warm, and between 4 and 5 p. m. angry looking clouds began to gather over the camp. At about 5 o'clock the storm suddenly broke forth, announcing its arrival by a tremendous volley of thunderbolts, which threw the inhabitants into a state of terror. Bolt after bolt struck in every direction in town, and the accompanying thunder was tremendous in its volume.

Rain in immense quantities followed the electrical display, and it was thought for a time that the lower sections of the town would be wiped out. Fortunately at the expiration of one hour and ten minutes the storm had spent its fury in that section of the country, and ceased to be a menace to life and property.—Bisbee Review.

For the convenience of patrons the new City Directory will be sold at the news stands as well as at the SILVER BELT office.

\$300 REWARD

Arrest for Murder

Tall, light-complexioned, thin-faced Mexican, about 5 feet, 9 or 10 inches in height, small beard all over his face, heaviest on the chin; about 35 years of age; was wearing a straw hat when last seen.

Also, short, heavy-set Mexican; black; looks like a Yaqui; 22 or 23 years of age; smooth face; wearing blue overalls and a black slouch hat, and carried a dark colored coat when last seen.

These men are wanted for the murder of Sam Plunkett and E. E. Kennedy at Livingstone, Gila county, Arizona, on July 12, 1905.

They stole about \$100 in currency, a gold watch and a 38-caliber Colt's revolver on a 45 frame.

Three hundred dollars will be paid for the arrest and conviction of the murderers.

E. P. SHANLEY,
Sheriff of Gila County, Arizona.
Dated July 15, 1905

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